

Including Gender in the Work of USAID/Mexico: Lessons Learned

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Including Gender in the Work of USAID/Mexico: Lessons Learned

by

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PREFACE

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document has two purposes. First, it is a report of a consultancy undertaken in Mexico City in July 1997 by WIDTECH, USAID/G/WID and sponsored by USAID/Mexico. The consultancy included a workshop, “Including a Gender Perspective in Development.” Second, the document is a guide for the staff of USAID/Mexico and their partners as they work to include gender in their projects and programs. Each section of the document can be used for a specific purpose:

Section I: “USAID/Mexico Strategy and Its Inclusion of Gender,” can serve as an example for reviewing USAID/Mexico objectives, strategies, and “R4s” for the inclusion of gender.

Section II: “Conversations on Gender and Participation with USAID/Mexico Partners,” can stimulate USAID partners to consider how they would explain to others their work with gender within their organizations.

Section III: “Gender Perspectives in Development: The Workshop,” has two purposes:

- The workshop format can be used for other training sessions. Materials and instructions for some of the workshop exercises are found in the document’s appendix.
- The results from the participant discussions are to be found under Day Two of the workshop (p.15-19) Both the staff of USAID/Mexico and their partners can use these results, which include lessons learned, as a basis for monitoring and evaluating their work.

Section IV: “Future Actions,” gives specific recommendations to the staff of USAID/Mexico for their follow-up and action.

Section V: “Cross-Sectoral Instructional Materials on Gender in Spanish” can be pulled out and used separately as a hand-out in a variety of settings where appropriate—for example, workshops, meetings, and conferences. This bibliography can be disseminated as a short publication of USAID/Mexico.

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INTRODUCTION

The WIDTECH Project, funded by the Office of Women in Development (G/WID) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), provides technical assistance and training to USAID bureaus and Missions. From July 9 to July 18, 1997, Maria de la Paz Lopez, a gender specialist and consultant based in Mexico, and Mary Hill Rojas, a gender specialist for WIDTECH, worked with USAID/Mexico in Mexico City at the request of Nancy Sweeney, USAID/HIV/AIDS Project Coordinator/Mexico and James Rieger, USAID/Environmental Advisor/Mexico.

The specific request was for us to identify, strengthen, and report on the Mission's work with gender by:

- Having conversations with Mission staff and local partners and reviewing documents.
- Designing and facilitating a participatory workshop based on the initial conversations that would help to: (1) clarify gender issues within each participant's particular work context and sector; and (2) develop strategies for integrating gender and WID issues throughout the USAID Mission's projects and programs.
- Providing follow-up to the workshop through individual or small-group work with the participants at their request to further their particular approach to the strategic plan.
- Providing a document on the review, the workshop, and the follow-up that would serve as a manual on gender for the work of the Mission and local partners. This document can be used by staff and partners to assist them in integrating gender into their work. It can also be given to new staff and partners as an orientation to the Mission's approach toward gender and issues of concern to women.
- Suggesting instructional materials in Spanish for use by institutions and project managers.

The result of this assignment is this document. It is divided into five sections: (1) USAID/Mexico strategy related to gender; (2) Conversations on gender with USAID/Mexico partners; (3) The results of the workshop, "Gender Perspectives in Development"; (4) Future Actions; and (5) Cross-Sectoral Instructional Materials in Spanish.

The authors are grateful to Nancy Sweeney and James Rieger, who planned and supported this assignment. We also want to thank all the staff of the USAID Mission and their partners who met with us. They were enthusiastic about their work and committed to addressing gender issues. We appreciate the insights they gave us.

SECTION I

THE USAID/MEXICO STRATEGY AND ITS INCLUSION OF GENDER

There is now global recognition of the importance of gender and the status of women to effective development. This recognition comes after two decades of research and fieldwork affirmed by the series of global conferences of the past five years and culminating in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recognized the critical role of women in development by establishing policy on women in development and the Office of Women in Development (G/WID) more than 20 years ago. USAID continues today to play a leading role worldwide in issues dealing with gender and development.

In March 1996, J. Brian Atwood, USAID Administrator, presented a "Gender Plan of Action," which is to continue to "ensure the integration of gender considerations into the Agency's programs" and "foster the institutional changes needed to support women in development." He noted that "the greatest accomplishment is the increasing realization that, for development to be effective, programs must pay attention to the central role of women in the economic and social advancement of a nation."

The USAID/Mexico Mission's 1996 Results Review and Resource Request (R4) reflects the Agency's focus on gender and issues of concern to women:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1 - POPULATION: SUSTAINABLE INCREASE IN CONTRACEPTIVE PREVALENCE

The Cairo Conference in 1994 addressed women's equality and men's responsibility in successful population policies and reproductive health programs. The conference also recognized the central role of sexuality and gender relations in women's health and rights. The USAID/Mexico R4 reflects these strategies. Men are highlighted in the public sector activities as a specific population for service delivery and educational strategies. These activities include strengthening of the no-scalpel vasectomy program (p.8). The Family Planning Communication Survey funded by USAID for the first time interviewed men as well as women on family planning. The concept of reaching women with "unmet needs" is a central part of the U.S.-Mexico Program of Collaboration on Population and Reproductive Health.

Several of the indicators for the sustainable increase in contraceptive prevalence use women as the unit of measure: "Percent of women at risk for a pregnancy who do not desire children"(p.18). One measure to increase "the availability of quality family planning services in target areas" is the "percent of married women of reproductive age using contraception." Although the choice of women as indicators highlights the role of women in reproductive health, the choice does not reflect the role of men. The Cairo Programme of Action stated that "special efforts should be made to emphasize men's shared responsibility and promote their active

involvement in responsible parenthood, sexual and reproductive behavior, including family planning; prenatal, maternal, and child health; prevention of sexually transmitted diseases... (and) prevention of unwanted and high-risk pregnancies (Chap. IV, 4.27). There are often good reasons to have one sex or the other as indicators of progress toward objectives. If the gender approach is to be used, however, justification for such use is needed.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2: ENVIRONMENT: ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND NATURAL RESOURCE AND ENERGY USE INCREASED

The strategy emphasizes a community-based ecological approach: “ By strengthening NGOs and community groups active in biodiversity preservation and other ecological issues, USAID helped foster democratic pluralism and civic institution-building from a grassroots level upward” (p.22). A community-based ecological approach recognizes the interaction of the environment and natural resource management with political, economic, and social forces. It is an approach that is emphasized in USAID environmental policy. Such an approach recognizes that people most closely linked to their environment and natural resources should participate in the decisions on the use of those resources and be involved in their conservation. At the same time, participation also contributes to strengthening democratic principles such as representation, to strengthening democratic structures, and to training for leadership. Men and women both should benefit from such participation and contribute to it.

The power of data disaggregated by gender is revealed in the USAID/Mexico strategy. One indicator for measuring “improved management of target protected areas and their buffer zones” is the number of people, disaggregated by sex, “participating in and earning income from alternative, sustainable, nature-based economic activities” (p.35). The numbers mentioned are that 25 percent of the participants involved in these activities are women (p.29). The percentage of men is not spelled out, but when the two figures are put side by side, 25 percent women and 75 percent men, the discrepancy is dramatic and begs the question: “Why the great gap?” There may be reasons and they should be clarified; for example, perhaps no women had previously been included, and now that omission is being addressed. The same is true of the “personnel hired by all programs in the biodiversity portfolio, including NGO and grantee organization employees and park staff,” 15 percent of whom are women. Therefore, 85 percent of the employees are men, a finding that has repercussions for programs and underlines the need to carefully strategize on how to reach women.

Special Objective #2 –Democracy: Strengthened Capacity of Target Institutions to Deal with Selected Democracy/Human Rights Issues

Gender and issues of concern to women are an integral part of democracy and governance issues. Representative democracy, as the R4 states, is “the sole political system which guarantees respect for human rights and the rule of law; it safeguards cultural diversity, pluralism, and respect for the rights of minorities, and peace within and among nations” (p.37). Therefore, the strategy states that an area of priority in the governance program is “the promotion

of greater participation by women in all stages of the political process (p.44) and ...of particular interest will be the participation of women in all levels of public life and politics” (p.45). Ensuring that women are included in the efforts with democracy and governance through special efforts is a first step. A second step is to ensure that women are included throughout the program and not simply in the women’s components. For example, it would be useful to know the percentage of women and men who participated in the electoral reform seminar held by the Alianza Civica, which was “attended by more than 100 participants, including federal and state election officials, journalists, academics, and representatives of all major political parties” (p.44).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3: HIV/AIDS: IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE OF MODES OF TRANSMISSION AND PREVENTION OF HIV/AIDS

Gender relations are central to any program to contain HIV/AIDS. There are studies that show, for example, that women understand HIV transmission and have access to condoms but lack the power to control their partners’ sexual behavior. At present women constitute an estimated 40 percent of some 18 million HIV-infected adults worldwide, and the gender gap is closing rapidly in Latin America. It is well established that cultural and social factors play a large role in the transmission of AIDS, but the unavailability of reliable data on women’s sexual lives and the cultural factors that act as determinants of their sexual experiences are less well known. (International Center for Research on Women, Women and AIDS Project, Washington, D.C.)

In recognition of the vital role gender plays in the transmission and containment of HIV/AIDS, the USAID/Mexico strategy states: “ While women are not a target group *per se* of the Special Objective on HIV/AIDS, gender is a cross-cutting issue in virtually all of the activities in the portfolio. In Michoacan, the community health workers who are trained through the MUSS program are women. The Frente Comun in Oaxaca holds women’s discussion groups in private homes, where topics on sexual health are raised that would create embarrassment and discomfort in the presence of men. “Nosotros Tambien,” a video about women and AIDS, was produced by trainees in the Santa Cruz program.” Although core to the concept of “gender” are issues of concern to women, equally important for HIV/AIDS are the gender relations between men and women and the control men often have over women’s sexuality. It is to be assumed that the latter are the issues discussed in the women’s groups such as those mentioned above and that similar groups of men are also being supported.

SECTION II

CONVERSATIONS ON GENDER AND PARTICIPATION WITH USAID/MEXICO PARTNERS

Maria de la Paz Lopez, gender specialist, Mexico City, and Mary Hill Rojas, gender specialist, Washington, D.C., spent four days in Mexico City conversing with the partners of the USAID/Mexico Mission about their work integrating gender into their projects and programs with the environment, natural resource management, democracy and governance, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. The *notes* on those conversations, highlighting the lessons learned, follow.

WORLD WILDLIFE FUND (WWF)

Dr. Eduardo Iñigo, Director of Conservation

The project, Proyecto de Ecodesarrollo, has funding from USAID, although currently it is in its final phase. The available funds, therefore, are considered a transition toward a new proposal for the next four years. The project takes place in three geographical areas of the country, and WWF's work is conducted with partners such as PRONATURA (in the Yucatan peninsula), and Unión de Ejidos, "El Triunfo de los Pobres" (The Triumph of the Poor).

In the proposed phase, WWF is considering a focus on multiple actors —that is, involving the communities to a greater extent, because nongovernmental agencies working with the communities cannot handle all of the issues related to the environment.

The PRONATURA project has been working for four years in the Yucatan peninsula in the Calakmul reserve. One component of the project consists of environmental education aimed at women. One of the activities is to train women to create family orchards to supply fruit for family consumption. The area has many problems accessing water resources, and food self-sufficiency is considered a very important issue. Other activities directed at women include training in the use and preparation of medicinal plants, and forums for exchanging ideas and experiences regarding activities to generate income.

In addition, a study is being carried out —with USAID funds —on population distribution and population dynamics. For example, the study will examine the resource use and activities in the 71 hamlets surrounding the area of the reserve, where economic activities depend to a great extent on wood and the extraction of rubber.

The state government endorses activities that promote agricultural sustainability as well as tourism in the area. One of the main problems of the area is land conflict.

The current WWF project promotes communal activities outside the home for women without adding to women's work load.

PRONATURA projects seek to have an impact on the whole population. The training of women seeks to make agriculture sustainable while avoiding the traditional practice of "slash

Obstacles

One of the most serious obstacles the project faces is the difficulty in carrying out evaluations on the impact of the activities on the conservation of biodiversity. This difficulty is the result of a lack of information and of the failure to include impact assessment during project development.

Lessons Learned and Agenda for the Future

In the next phase, there will be an attempt to reorient the project to take into consideration institutional structure and change—for example, with aspects relating to democracy and leadership. The incorporation of quantitative indicators will facilitate monitoring and evaluating the project from the point of view of community participation, something that has not been carried out in the past. In the future, efforts to stimulate community participation will be significantly increased.

A significant outcome of an apiculture project was the request made by women to be incorporated into this activity. One of the decisions made by the community was to allow women to establish bee colonies near their homes in areas that were not being used for agricultural purposes. This way, there was a double effect: the participation of women in a productive activity, and the conservation of these physical spaces. Based on this experience, it is clear the importance of taking into account the access to and use of the geographic spaces that men have and that women have.

IMSS/SOLIDARIDAD

Dr. Angel Flores, Coordinator of Community Action

The project on Reproductive Health of IMSS/Solidaridad is carried out under the primary health care model, which involves the community in problem solving, limits activities to those based on available resources, and utilizes technology that is low cost and socially acceptable.

IMSS/Solidaridad serves the rural population in 17 states of the republic through 3,500 medical units and 62 rural hospitals. The institution's endeavors are centered on the community

and include a strong training component for the local population on alternatives for community development.

The organizational structure of Solidaridad consists of: health committees, rural *promotores*, and rural health assistants. The personnel, often volunteer, have the incentive of serving their communities as well as that of receiving training and scholarships.

These types of community organizations highlight the strong participation of women as *promotores* (85 percent) and rural health assistants (81 percent); however, women's participation on the health committees is poor; most committee members are men who are considered heads of households.

Obstacles

From a gender perspective, a significant obstacle that was identified was the divergent views of the population regarding the status of women; for some indigenous groups, the subordination of women is absolute, whereas in other ethnic groups, women are much more empowered. This question of status has an impact on women's control of their health and on their ability to participate fully in the work of Solidaridad.

Lessons Learned and Agenda for the Future

The experience acquired during the implementation of the project shows that activities to address gender inequity within a reproductive health framework must consider the local cultural and socio-economic context and tailor the activities accordingly. A further suggestion is to increase involvement of the male population in reproductive rights issues.

IBEROAMERICANA UNIVERSITY

Dr. Javier Riojas, Director of Environment and Sustainable Development

During the meeting with Dr. Riojas, environment issues tied to gender were discussed. Dr. Riojas stated that research in the field of environment from a gender perspective is very limited; the links between gender and environmental issues are difficult to establish and, therefore, for some investigators, do not exist. There is a lack of understanding of the links and a lack of clarity among academics on what is meant by "gender and the environment."

There followed a discussion on the relationship between access to natural resources and control of them, and the gender inequities involved—for example, women and land tenure in Mexico.

Lessons Learned

Involving academic researchers in research on gender and the environment is an important challenge. It is suggested that there be a close relationship between academics and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), maybe through meetings and workshops, that would allow academics to learn from the NGO experience. It is important that academics understand the gender-environment link because academics are often called on for technical assistance to NGOs and other international development agencies.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAM FROM THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH

**Dr. Gregorio Perez Palacios, General Director
of Reproductive Health (DGR)**

Dr. Ana Maria Goitia Marquez, Director of Health Promotion

Dr. Maria Teresa Maechetto

The Reproductive Health Program has three fundamental components: (1) family planning, (2) perinatal health, and (3) women's health.

The family planning component includes sexual and reproductive health; detection of sexually transmitted disease; vasectomies, contraception, post-partum health; nurses training; and the removal and insertion of IUDs.

- The perinatal health component includes attention to pregnancy, delivery, puerperium, and the attention to the newborn. Special attention has been given to the prevention of maternal and infant mortality.
- Women's health includes cervical-uterine cancer, menopause and post-menopause concerns, and infertility.

Obstacles

A basic obstacle to the incorporation of gender in health programs is the resistance of decision makers to its inclusion. Many do not see any quantifiable benefits or ways of objectively measuring gender in the monitoring of projects and programs.

Another obstacle in advancing the gender perspective in the health sector has been the form in which the training sessions on gender and reproductive health have been implemented. Generally, such training has been through modules specific to gender and isolated from other training.

Lessons Learned and an Agenda for the Future

The Office for Reproductive Health considers of major importance developing a new strategy that incorporates a gender perspective across programs. Among the specific strategies being considered is to rescue the image of the father, as well as to promote various means of communication with a gender focus oriented toward health-service providers.

There is a strong need to undertake gender sensitization programs for the employees responsible for women's health.

CONASIDA/FUNSALUD, PROJECT FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

**Dr. José Antonio Izazola, Executive Coordinator of the Initiative
for the Prevention and Control of AIDS**

One challenge in the prevention and control of AIDS has been to conduct an assessment of the general population at risk for the disease. Previously, institutions focused on high-risk populations and often excluded other sectors of society. New information about sexual practices was generated from this assessment; however, the data have not yet been used in prevention programs.

For women, the big challenge with AIDS prevention is how to avoid becoming infected, primarily by ensuring that their partners are conscious of the risks of infection. As for the interventions aimed at men, emphasis is on avoiding infection from bisexual practices.

The use of condoms by the clients of sex-workers has increased in establishments of prostitution. The women in the establishments have greater possibilities for negotiation on condom use with their clients than do sex-workers on the streets.

To have more effective interventions, it is necessary to focus preventive actions on a variety of risk groups, taking into consideration that HIV is one of many sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Obstacles

Programs on prevention and control of AIDS have not incorporated STDs as risk factors associated with AIDS transmission. One institutional limitation in the Secretary of Health is that STDs are only dealt with from a prevention perspective in the family planning sector. In this regard, CONASIDA is one example of attention, but not prevention.

AIDS has been approached as an illness of homosexual men, which results in a focus on campaigns for condom use.

An additional obstacle is the general feeling that the solution to AIDS lies in prevention among the young. The emphasis on youth is apparent in the media campaigns on AIDS. It is essential to include this population, but not to the exclusion of other sectors of society. The emphasis on condoms in the youth campaigns is politically acceptable, however, because other contraceptive methods need parental consent and may often have unwanted side effects.

According to Dr. Izazola, the massive campaigns and efforts to prevent AIDS have been inefficient and insufficient.

There is a lack of research on the dynamics of the AIDS epidemic; for example, more information is needed on new cases of people infected with HIV.

There is talk about a “vulnerable group” that consists of women, young people, and migrants; however, these make up only 23 percent of the cases. Therefore, how much emphasis should be given to them is debatable.

Another obstacle in controlling AIDS is that only half of the population that has an STD goes to see a doctor, and men tend to see a doctor only when they show symptoms.

Lessons Learned and an Agenda for the Future

An important challenge is to determine how men are infected with AIDS and, in turn, how they infect their partners. With this knowledge, activities can be better oriented toward prevention and breaking the chain of transmission.

Because a heterosexual epidemic is unlikely, prevention activities should be focused. Adequate counseling on AIDS prevention should be given to men that practice bisexuality. This may prove an efficient method of prevention.

The real advances for the prevention and control of AIDS are those that refer to sexuality and gender. As power relations change between men and women, there will be more possibilities of negotiation in the way sex is practiced —namely, more equity among men and women.

A focus on gender may slow short-term actions, but the actions taken are more effective in the long term.

Sex education, especially about STDs, should be seen as an interdisciplinary issue, not simply as a technical medical issue. Until now, health personnel have provided health services and often avoided the social aspects of sex education because personnel believed “hard scientific efficiency” should be practiced in health care delivery.

In practice, there is little consensus as to what is to be gained with the new gender paradigm. In all the women and health meetings, there are few men. There must be a greater interchange between men and women and greater inclusion of men in the gender perspective.

CONASIDA

Lic. Raquel Marchetti

Lic. Guillermo Egremi

A new focus of CONASIDA is to seek the prevention of HIV transmission through training activities. This is done in an interdisciplinary way through training courses directed toward workers with specific profiles. AIDS is thought of now as a problem of education. Therefore, there is an arrangement with the Secretary of Public Education to put into place a pilot training program on AIDS that incorporates a gender perspective.

Workshops have taken place using group dynamics, where the perceptions of middle-class women have been questioned regarding their sexuality, their sexual conduct that puts them at risk, and their attitudes that prevent them from reflecting on their behavior.

The gender perspective gives people a different attitude, one that generates different behavior. One of the greatest obstacles to including a gender focus in programs is that although the inclusion of gender has been an important theoretical development, it has not been paralleled with practical advances. Looking toward the future, there is an urgent necessity to integrate a gender focus into institutions, and officials need to include a budget for this activity. This implies, however, that those developing the budgets and those in authority are gender-sensitive, an area where international agencies can play an important role.

CITIZENS MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (MCD)

Luz Rosales Esteva and Rosy Laura Castellanos, Directors of Citizens Education

The principal objective in this association is to promote democracy and, simultaneously, advance equality. The association also promotes a sense of citizenship for women. To accomplish these objectives, the association puts on training workshops for facilitators who then work with communities to advance democracy. Work is taking place in 28 states in Mexico with 80 organizations, and MCD seeks to strengthen these organizations through sensitization courses for further outreach.

The work of this organization is supported through a bimonthly bulletin, a Web page, and through urgent actions.

Participation is seen at three levels:

- With the communities;
- Within institutions, and

- At the policy level, where a democratic philosophy ensures the inclusion of both men and women.

MCD seeks to promote the participation of people who have traditionally been excluded: women, children, and the elderly. Therefore, gender considerations naturally permeate the association's activities and actions.

SECTION III

GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN DEVELOPMENT: THE WORKSHOP

A workshop, “Gender Perspectives in Development,” was one outcome of the conversations with the USAID/Mexico partners. The workshop was facilitated by Maria de la Paz Lopez, gender specialist, Mexico City, and Mary Hill Rojas, gender specialist, WIDTECH. The workshop was held in Mexico City on July 16 and 17, 1997, for some 30 participants, USAID/Mexico staff, partners, and friends. (See Annexes I and II for agenda and participant list.)

The general objective of the workshop was to integrate more fully gender and issues of concern to women into the projects and programs of USAID/Mexico and its partners.

The specific objectives were to: (1) provide concepts and tools for using gender; (2) provide an exchange of experiences and ideas; (3) identify the successes and obstacles in working with gender; and (4) plan strategies for the future.

DAY ONE

During Day One, concepts dealing with gender were presented. The participants met in small groups and related the concepts to their own context, projects, and programs. What follows is the structure for Day One and the concepts presented. The discussion that resulted from the work of Day One is presented under Day Two.

Session One: Using Gender Concepts in Your Work

Defining Gender

For the purposes of the workshop, gender was defined as: “the differences and similarities in roles, rights, and responsibilities between men and women that are socially determined and are changeable and not universal.” Sex, on the other hand, means the biologically determined differences that are universal.

Gender as an Integral Part of Development

Often gender and issues of concern to women are thought of as a separate component of development projects, programs, and activities. Gender issues are seen as an “add-on.” However, the objective of most development programs is to work within a framework of democratic principles, often using a community-based approach when appropriate.

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The Importance of Data Disaggregated by Sex: Fundamental to gender analysis is data disaggregated by sex. The participants were shown literacy rates from Niger that are not disaggregated and then rates that are disaggregated (see Annex III). The small groups were asked to discuss why they thought there was such a great gap between men's and women's literacy rates. Participants were not required or expected to know about the socioeconomic conditions in Niger. Rather, they brainstormed global reasons for women having higher illiteracy rates than men. The point of this exercise was to point out that when data are disaggregated by sex, new discussion is generated and new ideas and solutions to development problems are introduced.

- The Invisibility of Women in Statistics: The overhead “According to Statistics, She’s Not Working” (see Annex III; in Spanish and in English), was shown to the participants, and discussion was elicited on how women’s work often is not counted.

Summary: We now understand that there are many reasons women often lag behind men on economic, educational, and political indices. However, there is one global reason that can be addressed with little difficulty by USAID staff and partners: the invisibility of women.

Women, because they traditionally have not set agendas or served in decision-making roles to the extent men have, are often invisible. In international development, much has been done within the last two decades to make women visible, and we now have universal standards and guidance to help us do so —the Beijing Platform for Action, USAID/WID Policy and Action Plans, The Declaration of Human Rights, disaggregated data of vital indicators in Mexico, and the like. We now recognize the roles women play in the informal and formal economic sectors, in agricultural production, and in natural resource management. Women in every country are organizing for greater participation in political systems. Policy is increasingly responsive to women’s claims, for example, to land tenure. Nevertheless, women still suffer from invisibility in policy making, in institutions, and in field programs, and as a result, benefits of development overwhelmingly go to men. Therefore, one lesson learned is that we, as development practitioners, must continually devise strategies to make women visible.

Indicators with a Focus on Gender

Many international development practitioners ask, “How can we measure gender?” The participants were divided into small groups, and each group was assigned one of three terms: “equity,” “empowerment,” and “participation.” The participants in each group discussed the terms within the context of their own work, making sure the discussion revolved around the term as it related to gender. For example, “empowerment” may be defined as a program to encourage women to become active in politics or to learn negotiation skills to insist on the use of a condom with their partner. The indicators to measure “empowerment” then are, for example, the numbers of women who run for public office and the reports of women using the learned negotiating skills. Therefore, “empowerment” is defined according to the particular context.

If global indicators are needed, some of those already constructed can be useful, for example, the gender empowerment measure (GEM) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). GEM uses as indicators for empowerment three measures:

- (1) Women’s representation in parliaments.
- (2) Women’s share of positions classified as managerial and professionals.
- (3) Women’s participation in the active labor force and their share of national income. (See UNDP Human Development Report, 1996, p.4; also see for natural resource management, Thomas-Slayter, Barbara et al. “Gender, Equity, and Effective Resource Management in Africa: Building Indicators.” ECOGEN: Clark University,

Worcester, Massachusetts. 1996; also see for general guidance, “The Guide to Gender-Sensitive Indicators.” The Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA]: Toronto, Canada. 1995.)

Session Two: Dr. Daniel Cazes, Gender Specialist, Mexico City

Dr. Cazes has written a guide, “A Gender Perspective,” on how to integrate gender and issues of concern to women in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of research and field projects. The guide is written in Spanish. Dr. Cazes spoke at the workshop on gender theory and analysis and on some of the basic notions and definitions of a gender perspective included in the guide. A preliminary version of the guide is included in Annex IV of this document.

Session Three: Using Gender Analysis in Your Work

The cornerstones of gender analysis were presented and related to the World Wildlife Fund Program in Mexico:

- *Gender Relations:* Within the social unit of analysis (household, community, institution, or farming system), ask about access and control over resources. For example: Who has access to condoms and who controls their use? Who has access to tree products and who controls their use? Who has access to education and who sets the education agenda?
- *Gender Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities:* Often the roles, rights, and responsibilities of women and men differ. If you target truck drivers for HIV/AIDS prevention, you are most likely targeting men. If you provide training during the hours women must tend children, you train men. Therefore, ask: What is the division of labor between the sexes (for example, men plant, women weed, men harvest, women cook the produce)? What rights do men have that women do not have and vice versa (for example, a livestock project may target women, but on the death of a husband, the cows go to the male relatives, not to the widow)? What responsibilities do men have that women do not have, and vice versa (for example, women pay school fees and are concerned with the health of the children)?
- *Socio-spatial Dynamics:* Mobility, displacement, migration, and the spatial location of human activity are commonly differentiated by gender. (Public spaces may be primarily male, because they are used for formal meetings. Land close to the household may be primarily female, because it is used for kitchen gardens and range chickens. Women’s space for mobility may be limited.)*

* See Picard, Mary. *A Guide to the Gender Dimension of Environment and Natural Resource Management*, USAID/Africa Bureau/Washington, D.C., 1997

DAY TWO

On Day Two, participants worked in small groups within their sectors —HIV/AIDS, environment, and reproductive health—to determine the successes, obstacles, and lessons learned from their work with gender in their sector. Then these lessons learned were shared with the full group. The results of this exercise are included here by sector:

HIV/AIDS

The Problems and Obstacles Identified

Within the HIV/AIDS professional community and the health system, the medical doctor, typically male, leads and the nurse, typically female, plays the role of subordinate. This institutional structure places the doctor as all-powerful and, therefore, tends to denigrate the work of the nurses and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working with HIV/AIDS. This structure often has negative repercussions:

- There is resistance among the doctors to participating in courses on capacity building for the prevention and treatment of AIDS.
- Medical doctors, mostly men, make the decisions regarding women's health.

AIDS is basically a problem of education, yet until now has exclusively been in the hands of doctors.

- Doctors are unfamiliar with educational processes that lead to effective HIV/AIDS programs. This unfamiliarity restricts the ability of the health sector to modify sexual behaviors of the general population through education.

There are other obstacles to effective HIV/AIDS programs:

- An important part of the female population is home-based and does not have access to the information on AIDS through institutions such as schools or within the health sector.
- The information on men's sexuality is scarce, and even less is known of women's sexuality. Therefore, many myths and stereotypes surround both men's and women's sexual behavior, leading to difficulties in knowing how best to change that behavior.
- The use of inappropriate, technical language makes it difficult for the general population to understand the messages about HIV/AIDS. Therefore, it is important that the characteristics and language of the population be taken into account. For example, in Jalapa there is little knowledge of the terminology of men's sexuality.

Lessons Learned

- A gender focus needs to be institutionalized in the AIDS prevention and treatment programs.
- The AIDS programs should not only be located in the health sector but also among educators who can incorporate nonmedical elements. For example, men and women can be trained in ways to enhance self-esteem leading to new behaviors related to AIDS prevention.
- Training of HIV/AIDS personnel needs to include a gender perspective and involve the Secretariat of Public Education.
- Health workers should give adequate and suitable attention to human rights and respect those rights in all circumstances when dealing with the prevention of HIV/AIDS.
- Information and messages on HIV/AIDS prevention need to be translated for different groups of the population, such as for those speaking indigenous languages.
- The focus of NGOs is distinct from the focus of the institutionalized health sector. NGOs tend to confer a more central role onto women and to be further along in addressing gender issues than are institutions. As well, it is mostly women who attend to patients and clients within NGOs. Therefore, nurses play an important role in these organizations.
- The health sector institutions need to work more with nurses. The importance of the work of nurses has been proven with HIV/AIDS prevention. When nurses are treated as equals, the status barrier between nurses and doctors is broken.
- It is essential that doctors participate on a more equal footing with nurses and begin to recognize and reward the importance of the work of both nurses and NGOs.
- Both formal and informal education on HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission is necessary. Only a part of the population is within the formal education system. Therefore, informal educational activities in the labor sector are important to reach more of the population at risk for HIV/AIDS.
- One sex should not be privileged over the other in HIV/AIDS programs and projects; both sexes should be given equal opportunities. Therefore, sex-disaggregated data should be kept on those served. Activities that benefit both sexes and include men should be planned from the inception of the programs and projects addressing issues related to HIV/AIDS.

- Health workers should use an open, comprehensive approach in working with young people, taking into account the studies showing the differences of how girls and boys view sexuality.
- Messages on the prevention of HIV/AIDS should be made, emphasizing the importance of the mutual faithfulness and fidelity of partners.
- Importance should be given to targeting both men and women with HIV/AIDS-prevention messages without forgetting the power gap between men and women. Often women have little or no control over their own sexuality or that of their partner.
- Special programs on alternative job training and projects for groups at risk, such as sex workers, should be designed and implemented. NGOs, such as FEMAP, have experience with such projects that can serve as examples.
- Consciousness-raising workshops with women and men on behaviors leading to HIV/AIDS should be held both as a part of training of trainers and with the general population.
- Messages toward men and women should be focused differently depending on the local culture, age group, and general circumstance and context.

Reproductive Health

The Problems and Obstacles Identified

- Inequality has existed between the sexes for centuries and is therefore persistent.
- Currently Mexican society is not prepared for changes in women's roles, and there is resistance to change.
- Myths and strong fundamental beliefs about the proper roles, rights, and responsibilities of the sexes prevail.
- The incidence of men taking responsibility for reproductive health is low.
- There is not an appropriate and accepted conceptual framework for gender and reproductive health and, therefore, confusion results from the differences espoused in the implementation of the gender concept.
- Insufficient resources are available to address gender and reproductive health adequately. Therefore, the supervision and evaluation of the programs and projects from a gender perspective are insufficient.

- In general, more education is needed on the importance of gender to reproductive health.

Lessons Learned

- It is necessary to develop workshops on gender to sensitize senior policy makers in the various institutions dealing with reproductive health.
- It is urgent that the definition of gender be revised in a way that can be applied to the mainstream framework of national programs in the health sector (PNM/PNP/PNSR).
- There is a need to update the literature and the existing state-of-the art on gender and reproductive health to take advantage of lessons learned and the experiences of others.
- Actions need to be taken to eliminate the myths that have been created around gender so that the inclusion of a gender perspective in specific projects is more clearly understood.
- It is essential to continue including a gender perspective with programs and projects dealing with reproductive health.
- The concepts of gender and reproductive health must be adapted to suit the particular context, region, and culture.
- For better supervision and evaluation of projects and programs based on gender and reproductive health, it is necessary to: (1) implement adequate baseline studies; (2) construct an information system and database; (3) develop institutional indicators, both qualitative and quantitative; and (4) reinforce the evaluation of both training and reproductive health campaigns.
- Educational material with a gender perspective needs to be developed and tailored to the target population.
- The health sector continues to have a curative focus rather than a focus on prevention. A gender perspective allows for the possibility of modifying the curative focus in the health sector toward a “demedicalization” approach that relies on prevention and education.
- One way to address gender and reproductive health is to hold sensitization workshops for men and women with a basic package of information for everyone and with *ad hoc* themes included for the specific regional and cultural context.

- It is necessary to establish institutional networks of collaboration; one formula might be to establish committees that would reinforce programs by focusing on gender.

Environment

Problems and Obstacles Identified

- Because most indicators for the conservation of biodiversity measure the “natural environment” and not natural resource users, there are technical difficulties in constructing indicators that allow for the measurement of gender in relation to the environment.
- Baseline studies have not identified opportunities for women’s participation in environment programs and projects.
- Identifying opportunities for women is difficult because the perceptions of women’s traditional roles often exclude women from new opportunities that fall outside those roles.
- The development of integrated environmental programs that recognize the interaction of social, economic, and political concerns with conservation is still rare. Therefore, environmental projects generally have conservation goals not perceived to be linked to gender.
- Even though the environmental programs have goals related to gender, those implementing the programs find it difficult to define indicators for empowerment and equality.

Lessons Learned

- Development planners should find opportunities to relate gender and the environment in the communities with the existing resources to do so (for example, NGOs working with community development and conservation, women’s groups working with natural resources, and the like).
- Women’s participation in local environment councils (decision-making bodies) can be encouraged. However, an analysis of women’s roles, rights, and responsibilities should be undertaken first to understand how best to include women. Women’s participation must be promoted especially in the advisory councils for protected conservation areas.
- By promoting women’s leadership and autonomy and providing them with sufficient information, development planners can afford women the possibility of demanding involvement in decision making according to their own desires.

- Women have been successful as leaders especially in promoting conservation projects and in environmental education.
- Environmental programs need baseline studies that measure the participation of men and women in the conservation of the environment in their communities. Indicators to measure empowerment and equality in subsequent phases of the programs also need to be incorporated. Without these indicators, it is difficult to measure if the typical gap between men's and women's participation is, in fact, being addressed.

It is preferable that gender concepts are not imposed on communities but, rather, that the NGOs adopt the principle that conservation and community participation are linked. Participation means working with the whole community, men and women. In the same way, work with women should not be imposed but linked to the women's interest when given the opportunity.

The traditional stereotypes of the proper roles for men and women may prevent women from actively working against environmental degradation. The fight against these stereotypes should be gradual.

- General criteria for the integration of gender can be introduced into environmental projects and programs. For example, it can be required that men's and women's participation be measured. Opportunities that allow for both men's and women's involvement need first to be identified, however.
- Baseline studies should be conducted on women's and men's roles to determine the access to and control of natural resources of men and women, and the benefits both receive from them.
- Indicators must be constructed to take into account the context of the particular project. Global indicators may have limited utility.
- In strategic planning, the goal is to strengthen infrastructure to protect the environment. Although such planning must consider gender, it will not always be possible to incorporate a gender perspective.
- A challenge is to gain the participation of local groups so they may be empowered to work on conservation issues. This community participation brings conservation to a local level and supplements the work at the federal level.
- The projects and programs to protect the environment must consider sustainability once funding is terminated. This is particularly true with NGOs, for example, that have special activities for women. It is important that these organizations find ways in which these projects can garner financial resources to be sustainable.

- More field experience using gender as one of the central social variables in community participation is necessary, as is integrating the community itself in the development and implementation of environmental programs.
- Women's and men's traditional and cultural roles should be considered when implementing community development programs and programs directed toward women and men.

The Final Session: Dr. Marta Lamas, Anthropologist

Dr. Marta Lamas concluded the workshop with a presentation that clarified the key concepts that constitute a gender focus. She emphasized the importance of identifying, in our daily life, the gender-based myths and stereotypes that put women in a marginal position that results in exclusion, segregation, and discrimination. She also emphasized the need to recognize that gender roles are based in history and, therefore, vary depending on the specific social and cultural context.

SECTION IV

FUTURE ACTIONS

In general, USAID/Mexico AND ITS PARTNERS should utilize the varied resources of the USAID Office of Women in Development: WIDSR, WIDTECH, and WorldWID. If requested, G/WID can assist the individual sectors (environment, democracy and governance, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS) in capitalizing on their achievements in incorporating gender into their work.

DISTRIBUTION LIST FOR THIS DOCUMENT

For action on the recommendations of this document and for its distribution to the workshop participants, the following USAID/Mexico personnel should receive copies:

1. Jeff Boyer, Program Advisor
2. Marie McLeod, Reproductive Health
3. Frank Zadroga, Environment
4. Jim Rieger, Environment
5. Jene Thomas, Democracy and Governance
6. Nancy Sweeney, HIV/AIDS
7. Paty Santos, Training Specialist
8. Workshop participants (as listed in Annex II of this document)

These USAID G/WID personnel should receive copies for their action:

1. Andrea Allen, G/WID
2. Peter Davis, WIDTECH
3. Virginia Lambert, G/WID
4. Rekha Mehra, WIDTECH
5. Muneera Salem-Murdock, G/WID

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. It is recommended that G/WID work with the USAID/Mexico Democracy and Governance sector with the judicial exchange project between the United States and Mexico to assist with the inclusion of women and women's legal issues. For example, the project should capitalize on the fact that Ruth Bader Ginsberg, United States Supreme Court Justice, built much of her legal reputation on women and the law.

2. It is recommended that the environment sector develop a proposal for a G/WID small grant for working with community development, gender, and protected areas.
3. It is recommended that a gender specialist be brought in from time to time to review the work of the various sectors within the USAID/Mexico Mission, assist where needed, and provide advice and recommendations. Maria de la Paz Lopez, who worked on this assignment, has been suggested as a gender specialist in Mexico City who would be able to do this work. The environment sector could take the lead in this effort.
4. The Fall 1997 evaluation of the Parks in Peril Program will have a social scientist/gender specialist as a member of the team working with G/WID and the USAID Environment Center. G/WID has assisted in writing the Scope of Work for the evaluation. There are sites in Mexico for this evaluation, and the results of the evaluation can be used by the USAID/Mexico Mission to strengthen its environment and gender strategies.
5. The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), a WIDTECH contractor, has conducted significant research on women and AIDS over many years. Some of the research was done in Mexico. For information, contact ICRW, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016, telephone (202) 797-0007. The USAID/Mexico Mission can draw on this expertise through USAID/G/WID.
6. It is recommended that this document be reviewed by the appropriate USAID/Mexico staff and then distributed to the participants that attended the workshop reported on herein. The participants can use the document as a guide for their work on gender.
7. It is recommended that this document be used as an orientation tool for new USAID staff and partners.
8. It is recommended that the staff of USAID and their partners who attended the workshop use the workshop results (pages 15-19) as a monitoring and evaluation tool for their work on gender.
9. It is recommended that the document "Recipe for Gender and the Environment" (See Annex V; in English and Spanish) be distributed within the environment sector of USAID/Mexico and to its partners as a memorandum to stimulate discussion and thought. This "Recipe" was written for the USAID/Mexico environment sector by the WIDTECH team.

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